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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1967
INFO RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0235
RUCNMR/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 001244

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/04/2018

TAGS: PREL UNGA KV AR
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA WILL SUPPORT KOSOVO ICJ RESOLUTION AT
UNGA

REF: STATE 91908

Classified By: Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Poloff conveyed reftel points to Ambassador Raul Ricardes, General Director for Multilateral Affairs in Argentina's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and separately to Maria Fernanda Canas, the MFA's Sub-Director for North American Affairs, on September 4. Ricardes was accompanied by Minister Jaime Cerdá. Ricardes listened attentively to USG concerns outlined in paragraph 9 of reftel, and shared the hope that over time Serbia and Kosovo would be reconciled within a larger European future. He said that Argentina, nonetheless, building on its decision to not recognize Kosovo's independence, would support Serbia's proposal at the UNGA to seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Kosovo's independence.

¶2. (C) Ricardes described Argentina's longstanding engagement in the Balkans, including past and current participation in peacekeeping operations in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo (where Argentina has a small contingent of gendarmerie). He noted as well Argentina's support for UNSCR 1244, based on its support for a range of important principles but most importantly its recognition of sovereign territorial integrity. Argentina was supportive of a process based on negotiation between Serbian authorities and Kosovars, but was opposed to Kosovo's declaration of independence. He described Argentina's deep interest in the principle of territorial integrity as flowing directly from its claim over the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands, which it supported through peaceful efforts to encourage the United Kingdom to enter into negotiations over their status.

¶3. (C) Regarding the Serbian proposal, Ricardes described it as well drafted, neutral, and very specific to the question of Kosovo's declaration of independence. "It would not be easy for us to oppose a resolution like this," he said, and then clarified that Argentina would in fact support it. He did not see a significant threat that it would set a precedent for other disputes in other regions. He claimed that international recognition of Kosovo had encouraged ethnic Albanians in Macedonia and Serbs in Bosnia to consider their own moves toward separation.

¶4. (U) Ricardes said he would encourage his delegation in New York to be in touch with U.S. counterparts to discuss the resolution in more detail.

¶5. (C) Comment: Argentina is likely to hold to its position in support of the ICJ Resolution. The only opening might come if Argentina were convinced the ICJ would give preference to principles of self-determination over territorial integrity. End Comment.

WAYNE